U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
White River Field Office
73544 Hwy 64
Meeker, CO 81641

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

NUMBER: CO-110-2005-72 -EA

CASEFILE/PROJECT NUMBER (optional): N/A

PROJECT NAME: Spring Developments

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: East McAndrews Gulch Spring - T4N, R97W, Sec 35 NESE
Willow Spring - T4S, R99W, Sec 31 SESW
Wenschhof Spring – T1S, R94W, Sec 14, NESE

APPLICANT: Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

ISSUES AND CONCERNS (optional): N/A

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES:

Proposed Action: The proposed action is the reconstruction/development of three springs by the BLM Engineering Field Office Force Account Crew and/or grazing permittees using hand labor and mechanized equipment (example: JD 450 crawler tractor with backhoe). Development of these spring sites will involve excavation and collection of the spring source, trenching and installation of an approximately 2" diameter pipeline from the source to a tank (trough). The tanks will be either a "tire tank" with the inflow and overflow pipes coming up through a concrete plug in the center of the tank, or a fiberglass tank with the inflow and overflow coming up the side of the tank. Tank locations will be placed out of the drainage by building a pad of approximately 20' X 20' on the appropriate hillside/uplands. The pipeline length will vary 40'-100' from the spring and will be "on-grade", thus the spring will flow by gravity into the tank. The overflow for the developed tank sites will return water to the original channel. The spring source and collection box will be fenced with a buck and pole fence or other designs that meet BLM fence specifications.

The proposal will conform to BLM Manual H 1741-2, *Water Developments*. Actual work at the spring source and stream beds will be done by hand where possible. Proposed work would begin in late April to early July of 2005, or as time and weather allows.

East McAndrews Gulch Spring is located on BLM administrated lands in the McAndrews Gulch allotment (06600), and is situated within unnamed side drainage approximately 2.7 miles above

Deep Channel. The spring is located on an alkali hillside out of the drainage and has been developed in the past, as evident from an old post and wood debris at the site. The source will be fenced (approximately 30' X 30') using above mentioned methodologies with an approximately 50-80' pipeline between the source and tank. Within the drainage there are several small springs/seeps that ran surface water in 2003 (drought year) for short distances (5'-100') and vegetation at these sites consists of riparian and salt tolerant species.

Willow Spring is located within the Skinner Ridge allotment (06025) and produces approximately 2-3 gallons/minute. The spring is located on BLM administered lands below Skinner Ridge within a steep side drainage of Brush Creek. There is an existing nearby stock pond, and willows are present at the spring source, which will be fenced using a buck and pole design (approximately 30' X 40'). A tank will be placed approximately 40'-50' below the spring source.

Wenschhof Spring is located in the LaGrange R allotment (06825) and is found along a roadside at the head of an unnamed drainage approximately 1½ mile above Flag Creek. This spring is essentially a saturated point on the rangelands that supports a small riparian community of sedges. The proposal is to first dig a small test hole (6' X 6') using a backhoe to determine the extent of available water, which will be fenced under guidelines mentioned above. If this test determines water is available at a feasible quantity and rate, the source will be developed (piped, tanked, etc.) using procedures mentioned above. If the test determines development is not feasible, the test hole will be filled in, re-contoured to the original grade, and seeded.

Total surface disturbances associated with this proposal are expected to not exceed ¾ acre. All disturbances will be re-contoured and seeded using Native Seed Mix #6 below.

	Species (Variety)	Lbs. PLS per Acre	Ecological Sites
6	Bluebunch wheatgrass (Secar) Slender wheatgrass (Primar) Big Bluegrass (Sherman) Canby bluegrass (Canbar) Mountain brome (Bromer) Alternates: Blue flax[1/], rocky Mountain penstemon[2/], balsamroot	2 2 1 1 2	Alpine Meadow, Alpine Slopes, Aspen Woodlands, Brushy Loam, Deep clay Loam, Douglas-fir Woodland, Loamy Park, Mountain Loam, Mountain Meadows, Mountain Swale, Shallow Subalpine, Spruce-fir Woodland, Subalpine Loam

[1/]Appar
[2/]Bandera

Also, the sites will be monitored for a minimum of three years post disturbance to insure that no noxious and/or invasive species establish on the site. If such undesirable species do establish within the proposal area as a result of the disturbance, all noxious weeds will be eradicated using materials and methods approved by the Authorized Officer.

No Action Alternative: The springs would not be developed and/or reconstructed.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT NOT CARRIED FORWARD: None

NEED FOR THE ACTION: The proposed action will aid in the maintenance and effective operation of BLM rangelands. Development of the spring sources will provide water to livestock away from the source itself, thus decreasing the concentrated use of the springs by livestock and wildlife that leads to trampling. Also, development of the springs will provide water in a more usable form for livestock which will increase distribution use patterns. Therefore, with increase livestock distribution and spring sources being fences, the proposal will enhance in the meeting of Standards for Public Land Health through managed livestock grazing.

PLAN CONFORMANCE REVIEW: The Proposed Action is subject to and has been reviewed for conformance with the following plan (43 CFR 1610.5, BLM 1617.3):

Name of Plan: White River Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan (ROD/RMP).

Date Approved: July 1, 1997

Decision Number/Page: 2-25, Livestock Grazing, Range Improvements

Decision Language: Range improvements are necessary to control livestock use and improve rangeland condition.

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT / ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES / MITIGATION MEASURES:

STANDARDS FOR PUBLIC LAND HEALTH: In January 1997, Colorado Bureau of Land Management (BLM) approved the Standards for Public Land Health. These standards cover upland soils, riparian systems, plant and animal communities, threatened and endangered species, and water quality. Standards describe conditions needed to sustain public land health and relate to all uses of the public lands. Because a standard exists for these five categories, a finding must be made for each of them in an environmental analysis. These findings are located in specific elements listed below:

CRITICAL ELEMENTS

AIR QUALITY

Affected Environment: The area of the proposed action has been designated by the state of Colorado as a Class II air quality attainment area. This designation suggests that the pollutant concentrations for the area are far less than the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS).

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: Temporary reduction in ground cover will result due to construction of pipeline and tank locations. This reduction in cover will

temporarily leave soils exposed to eolian processes producing a temporary increase in levels of fugitive dust.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: Over grazing could reduce vegetal cover leaving soils exposed to eolian processes increasing levels of fugitive dust. Consequences resulting from the no action alternative would be longer term than those of the proposed action.

Mitigation: No additional mitigation is necessary.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Affected Environment: There are no recorded cultural resources in the proposed project areas of East McAndrews Gulch Spring, Willow Spring, and Wenschhof Spring. A Class III Pedestrian Survey was completed in the East McAndrews Drainage. No cultural resources were found. A Class III Pedestrian Survey was completed at Wenschhof Spring. No cultural resources were found. Willow Spring was inaccessible due to snow requiring a Class III Pedestrian Survey before actual construction can begin.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: No consequences are anticipated from the construction in the project areas of East McAndrews Gulch Spring or Wenschhof Spring.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: Impacts from the no-action alternative are not anticipated.

Mitigation: 1. A Class III Pedestrian Survey prior to construction at Willow Spring must take place before construction can begin. 2). The operator is responsible for informing all persons who are associated with the project operations that they will be subject to prosecution for knowingly disturbing historic or archaeological sites, or for collecting artifacts. If historic or archaeological materials are uncovered during any project or construction activities, the operator is to immediately stop activities in the immediate area of the find that might further disturb such materials, and immediately contact the authorized officer (AO). Within five working days the AO will inform the operator as to:

- whether the materials appear eligible for the National Register of Historic Places
- the mitigation measures the operator will likely have to undertake before the site can be used (assuming in situ preservation is not necessary)
- a timeframe for the AO to complete an expedited review under 36 CFR 800-11 to confirm, through the State Historic Preservation Officer, that the findings of the AO are correct and that mitigation is appropriate.

If the operator wishes, at any time, to relocate activities to avoid the expense of mitigation and/or the delays associated with this process, the AO will assume responsibility for whatever recordation and stabilization of the exposed materials may be required. Otherwise, the operator

will be responsible for mitigation cost. The AO will provide technical and procedural guidelines for the conduct of mitigation. Upon verification from the AO that the required mitigation has been completed, the operator will then be allowed to resume construction.

2. Pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(g) the holder of this authorization must notify the AO, by telephone, with written confirmation, immediately upon the discovery of human remains, funerary items, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony. Further, pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(c) and (d), you must stop activities in the vicinity of the discovery and protect it for 30 days or until notified to proceed by the authorized officer.

INVASIVE, NON-NATIVE SPECIES

Affected Environment: There are no known infestations of noxious weeds at the proposed sites for spring developments. Perennial pepperweed (tall Whitetop, *Lepidium latifolium*) occurs within Deep Channel and some side drainage, which is approximately 2.7 miles below East McAndrews Gulch Spring.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The proposed action will create a small level of earthen disturbances, if left in its disturbed state and/or with unsuccessful revegetation, it could provide safe sites for the establishment of noxious and/or undesirable weeds. With successful revegetation as outlined under the proposed action, it will provide a means for the establishment of seeded species which will have a direct competitive interaction with any potential undesirable species, thereby reducing the potential for the establishment of invasive plants.

The spring developments as proposed will have no direct localized impact on noxious weeds and/or invasive species. However, on a watershed and landscape scale, the developed springs will have a positive impact on vegetative communities with increased resilience to the establishment of undesirable species through the enhancement of livestock distribution.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: None

Mitigation: None

MIGRATORY BIRDS

Affected Environment: Construction activities associated with these project areas are site-specific and involve relatively little overall surface disturbance. Vegetation in the immediate vicinity of these sites is minimal to nonexistent and provides no utility for nesting birds.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: Although construction activities are scheduled to take place during the breeding season, all sites associated with the proposed action involve small areas with relatively little ground/shrub cover. Removal of livestock and appropriate reclamation (e.g., reseeding and fencing) from the immediate vicinity of these

springs will allow vegetation to reestablish, thus increasing herbaceous ground cover and enhance foraging opportunities for insectivorous and granivorous birds and their broods.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: The no action alternative would maintain grazing use in the immediate vicinity of the springs during the nesting season resulting in decreased availability of ground cover and foraging opportunities for migratory birds.

Mitigation: None

THREATENED, ENDANGERED, AND SENSITIVE ANIMAL SPECIES (includes a finding on Standard 4)

Affected Environment: There are no threatened, endangered or sensitive animal species known to inhabit or derive important use from the East McAndrews Gulch or Wenschhof Spring areas. Willow Spring is encompassed by overall sage-grouse habitat however; the spring itself is situated in a steep, confined draw, an area which typically assumes little activity by sage-grouse.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The proposed action would have no conceivable influence on Threatened and Endangered or Sensitive animal species.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: The no-action alternative would have no conceivable influence on special status animals.

Mitigation: None

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for Threatened & Endangered species: The proposed and no action alternatives would have no effective influence on populations or habitat associated with special status species and would be consistent with the long term maintenance of animal and plant land health standards.

WASTES, HAZARDOUS OR SOLID

Affected Environment: Hazardous or solid wastes are not expected to be a part of the affected environment. However, these materials my accidentally be introduced in the environment through the implementation of the proposed action. Fuel, oil, grease, and antifreeze are all associated with vehicles associated with implementing the proposed action and would only be introduced into the environment because of equipment failure. Minute loss of these materials through normal operation of equipment, maintenance and fueling procedures are not considered spills. Spills are generally defined as the loss of large quantities of these materials into the environment and are determined to be a spill on a case-by-case basis.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action (Continuation of Current Management): For any given accident or incident involving hazardous materials, consequences

will be dependent on the volume and nature of the incident and material released. Short term impacts such as contaminations of soils, vegetation, and surface water could occur.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative (No Grazing): No hazardous wastes would be introduced into the environment under the no action alternative.

Mitigation: The applicant shall be required to collect and properly dispose of any solid wastes generated by the proposed action.

WATER QUALITY, SURFACE AND GROUND (includes a finding on Standard 5)

Affected Environment: East McAndrews Gulch Spring is in an un-named tributary of Deep Channel Creek, tributary to Crooked Wash Creek which is a tributary to the White River. East McAndrews Gulch is situated in stream segment 9a of the White River Basin. The state of Colorado has listed segment 9a as "use protected", and have further classified this segment beneficial for the following uses: Aquatic life cold 2, recreation 2, water supply, and agriculture.

Willow Spring is a tributary to Roan Creek which is a tributary of the Colorado River. Willow Spring can be found in stream segment 14a of the Lower Colorado River Basin. The state of Colorado has also defined segment 14a as "use protected", and further classified the segment beneficial for the following uses: aquatic life cold 1, recreation 1b, water supply, and agriculture.

Finally, Wenschhof Spring is a tributary to Flag Creek which is a tributary of the White River. Wenschhof Spring is located in stream segment 9b of the White River Basin. Segment 9b has also been defined as "use protected", and further classified by the state of Colorado as being beneficial for the following uses: aquatic life cold (6/1-8/31), recreation 1a (9/1-5/31), recreation 2 (6/1-8/31), water supply, and agriculture.

In addition, all of the stream segments listed above have been given table values addressing water quality. These values indicate numeric standards for allowable physical, biological, inorganic and metal concentrations in surface water as addressed by the state of Colorado's water quality standards.

Environmental consequences of proposed action: Consequences of the proposed actions include temporary exposure of soils to erosional processes. In addition, removal of ground cover would likely increase the erosive potential of runoff and raindrop impact during storm events.

Environmental consequences of no action: Advanced deterioration of spring/channel morphology due to livestock/wildlife use could result.

Mitigation: Re-vegetate disturbed areas as recommended in proposed action, keep pipelines relatively shallow (less that 36" deep) and minimize disturbance at spring site.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for water quality: The water quality within the area of the proposed action currently meets water quality standards established by the state. The proposed action will potentially improve water quality in these stream segments.

WETLANDS AND RIPARIAN ZONES (includes a finding on Standard 2)

Affected Environment: For approximately 175 feet below the proposed East McAndrews Gulch Spring, the source supports a healthy and herbaceous riparian community dominated by inland saltgrass within a narrow band confined to the alkali side hill drainage. Live/surface water was evident for approximately 100 feet in 2003, which was a drought year. The source is located upon a hillside out of the main drainage and flows for approximately 100 feet before becoming intermittently subsurface at the main drainage. Within the main drainage, there are several small seep/springs within the drainage bottom and on the adjoining hillside that support confined riparian habitats. The proposal spring development is the largest source supporting riparian species within this channel. Some localized trampling by livestock is occurring at the immediate spring site (30-50 feet) as cattle access the area for water. Utilization rates by livestock on riparian species are within management objective levels to support and maintain a robust riparian community. The associated riparian zone is meeting Public Land Health Standards.

Willow Spring supports a healthy and herbaceous riparian community consisting of sedges, rushes, and willows in a narrow band along the consolidated shale streambeds for approximately 800-1200 feet within a steep and narrow drainage. The stream channels and riparian communities are relatively undisturbed by livestock and big game except for 30-50 feet below the spring source which are trampled.

Wenschhof Spring is essentially a small saturated zone (subsurface water) on the landscape that supports a small riparian community of sedges that is healthy and herbaceous. There are some disturbances within this riparian zone caused by vehicular traffic traveling off the nearby road into the saturation zone, thus causing excessive rutting.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: Development of the springs with a water source (tank) out of the drainage supporting riparian habitat is expected to result in a significant decrease in livestock use within the drainage bottoms at and below the spring sources. Also, the proposal of fencing the spring sources will eliminate livestock, wildlife, and vehicles from accessing the riparian community associated the spring, thus allowing full growth and establishment of riparian species. These situations would result in a decrease in trampling and utilization rates of riparian species with upland water and fencing off the source. Therefore, it will improve riparian expression, vigor, and establishment of riparian plants at all spring sites proposed for development.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: The present situation of livestock use within the riparian system would continue.

Mitigation: None

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for riparian systems: Riparian systems at the proposed development sites are currently meeting Public Land Health Standards, with some sites marginally meeting. Implementation of the proposed action will result in an improvement of riparian habitat. Therefore the Standard will continue to be met with an upward trend.

CRITICAL ELEMENTS NOT PRESENT OR NOT AFFECTED:

No ACEC's, flood plains, prime and unique farmlands, Wilderness, or Wild and Scenic Rivers, threatened, endangered or sensitive plants exist within the area affected by the proposed action. For threatened, endangered and sensitive plant species Public Land Health Standard is not applicable since neither the proposed nor the no-action alternative would have any influence on populations of, or habitats potentially occupied by, special status plants. There are also no Native American religious or environmental justice concerns associated with the proposed action.

NON-CRITICAL ELEMENTS

The following elements **must** be addressed due to the involvement of Standards for Public Land Health:

SOILS (includes a finding on Standard 1)

Affected Environment: Soils within the East McAndrews Gulch Spring locality are classified as Grieves-Yamo-Crestman association, 3-45% slopes, which are a Rolling Loam/Clayey Foothills ecological site. This map unit is on hills and toe slopes with an elevation range of 6,200 to 7,000 feet. The average annual precipitation is 11 to 12 inches, the average annual air temperature is 42 to 45 degrees F, and the average frost-free period is 75 to 95 days. This unit is 40 percent Grieves soil, 25 percent Yamo soil, and 20 percent Crestman soil. The Grieves soil is on the foot slopes, the Yamo soil is on the foot slopes and toe slopes and the Crestman soil is on the back slopes and crests. Yamo soils dominate the project locality and are very deep and well drained. They are formed in alluvium derived from sandstone with slopes of 3 to 15 percent. Typically, the surface layer is light brownish gray calcareous clay loam 5 inches thick. The upper 11 inches of the subsoil is light yellowish brown calcareous sandy clay loam. The lower part to a depth of 60 inches or more is pale yellow calcareous sandy clay loam. Permeability of the Yamo soil is moderate. Available water capacity is high. Effective rooting depth is 60 inches or more. Runoff is medium, and the hazard of water erosion is moderate. The hazard of soil blowing is moderate.

Soils within the vicinity of Willow Spring are inventoried as Parachute-Irigul-Rhone association, 3-45% slopes, which are a Brushy Loam Ecological Site. This map unit is on tops of mountains and ridges and on the crests and sides of hills. The native vegetation is mainly Gambel's oak, serviceberry, sagebrush, and grasses with an elevation range of 7,600 to 8,800 feet. The average annual precipitation is 18 to 22 inches, the average annual air temperature is 36 to 40 degrees F, and the average frost-free period is 65 to 80 days. This unit is about 35 percent Parachute loam,

30 percent Irigul channery loam, and 20 percent Rhone loam. The Parachute soil is on north- and west-facing side slopes, the Irigul soil is on ridges and south- and east-facing side slopes, and the Rhone soil is on toeslopes.

Soils within the Wenschhof Spring area are classified as Jerry-Thornburgh-Rhone complex, 8-65% Slopes (unit 45), which are a Brushy Loam Ecological Site. This unit is 35 percent Jerry loam that has slopes of 8 to 45 percent, 30 percent Thornburgh channery loam that has slopes of 8 of 65 percent, and 20 percent Rhone loam that has slopes of less than 15 percent, and the Rhone soil generally is on north-facing slopes. The components of this unit are so intricately intermingled that it was not practical to map them separately at the scale used. Included in this unit are small areas of Burnette loam, Blazon channery loam, Lamphier loam, Mergel channery loam, Owen Creek loam, Redthayne channery loam, and Rentsac channery loam. Also included are small areas of a soil that is more than 35 percent rock fragments and small areas of Rock outcrop. Rock outcrop consists of ridges and small exposed bluffs. Included areas make up about 15 percent of the total acreage. The percentage varies from one area to another. This unit is poorly suited to urban development. The main limitations are the potential for shrinking and swelling, slow permeability, steepness of slope, and the hazard of landslides.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The proposal will result in a small short-term disturbance of soils which will be revegetated. A portion of the short-term soil and vegetation disturbances would be offset in the long-term by reclaiming the disturbed area with a seed mix that is suited for these ecological sites. A greater distribution of authorized livestock resulting from the proposal will enhance soil stability by dispersing livestock use and lessening the potential for soil trampling within the channels immediately around the spring sources. Also, fencing off the spring sources will allow these sites to adequately grow vegetative cover which will provide greater soil stability and lessen the potential for excessive erosion of soils at the proposed sites.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: No change from the current situation. Present onsite disturbances such as soil trampling at the spring sources would continue.

Mitigation: None

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for upland soils: Upland soils in the vicinity of the proposals are currently meeting or exceeding the Standard. The proposed action will enhance soil Standards by improvement in livestock distribution and less soil trampling at the sources. Therefore, under the proposal, all sites will continue meeting the Standard with an upward trend of soil stability.

VEGETATION (includes a finding on Standard 3)

Affected Environment: The ecological site of East McAndrews Spring is a Clayey Foothills for the Yamo soil unit. The potential plant community on the Yamo soil is mainly western wheatgrass *(Agropyron smithii)*, bottlebrush squirreltail (*Sitanion hystrix)*, Douglas

rabbitbrush (*Chrysothamnus viscidiflorus)*, Sandberg bluegrass (*Poa secunda)*, Wyoming big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentate)*, and Juniper trees (*Juniperus osteosperma)* in the uplands. Salt tolerant vegetation within the vicinity of the proposal includes inland saltgrass (*Distichlis spicata)*, which dominates the spring site and is adapted to the alkali soils and water found within the area. The average annual production of air-dry vegetation ranges from 600 to 1,200 pounds per acre.

Willow Spring is contained within a Brushy Loam ecological site. The potential plant community on the Parachute and Rhone soils is mainly western wheatgrass, mountain brome (*Bromus marginatus)*, elk sedge (*Carex garberi)*, slender wheatgrass (*Agropyron trachycaulum)*, serviceberry (*Amelanchier spp.)*, mountain snowberry (*Symphoricarpos oreophilus)*, and willows (*Salix spp.)* are present at the spring source. Some areas support a few Gambel's oak (*Quercus gambeli)i* trees. The average annual production of air-dry vegetation is about 2,000 pounds per acre.

Wenschhof Spring is also a located within a Brushy Loam ecological site. The potential plant community on this unit is mainly Gambel oak, serviceberry, mountain brome, elk sedge, western wheatgrass, and bluegrasses (*Poa spp.*). Smaller amounts of snowberry, Letterman needlegrass (*Stipa lettermanii)*, slender wheatgrass, chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana)*, and big sagebrush are also present in the potential plant community. Small patches of stunted aspen (*Populus tremuloides*) are on the north-facing slopes. The production of forage is limited by a short growing season and steepness of slope. The average annual production of air-dry vegetation is about 2,500 pounds per acre.

All sites are currently meeting Public Land Health Standards for Plant Communities.

See the Riparian section of this document for a description of riparian vegetation.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The minimal short-term soil and vegetation disturbances would be offset in the long-term by reclaiming the disturbed area with a seed mix that is suited for these ecological sites. The proposed spring developments will enhance vegetative conditions by aiding in livestock distribution and lessening use within the drainages containing riparian habitat. Such enhancements will include less trampling by livestock of the vegetation within drainages near the spring sources, and more uniform utilization pattern of key plant species across the landscape with additional water availability for livestock. This situation will create a situation where the Standards will continue to be met with an upward trend in plant cover.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: The present situation will continue with less uniform grazing patterns and trampling of vegetation within the drainage bottoms near the spring sources.

Mitigation: None

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for plant and animal communities (partial, see also Wildlife, Aquatic and Wildlife, Terrestrial)*:* Plant communities are currently meeting the Standards

and will continue to be met under the proposed action with an upward trend through enhanced livestock management.

WILDLIFE, AQUATIC (includes a finding on Standard 3)

Affected Environment: The springs associated with the proposed action are not capable of supporting a simple invertebrate-based aquatic community.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The proposed action would have no conceivable influence on aquatic wildlife or habitat.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: There would be no affect on aquatic wildlife or associated habitats under the no action alternative.

Mitigation: None

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for plant and animal communities (partial, see also Vegetation and Wildlife, Terrestrial): Development of these springs would have no conceivable influence on the condition or function of aquatic wildlife or associated habitats and therefore would have no influence on continued maintenance of associated land health standards.

WILDLIFE, TERRESTRIAL (includes a finding on Standard 3)

Affected Environment: Wenschhof Spring and East McAndrews Gulch Spring are associated with big game winter ranges. Willow Spring is located within big game summer range. While immature pinyon-juniper and spruce-fir-aspen mix woodlands are located along the uplands surrounding East McAndrews Gulch and Willow Springs, respectively, the proposed action does not involve the removal of any woodland canopy cover. There is no suitable raptor nesting substrate in the vicinity of Wenschhof Spring. There are no cliffs suitable for raptor nesting in any of the project areas.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The proposed action would have no conceivable negative influence on terrestrial wildlife or habitats. Removal of woody forage, namely big sagebrush, would be minimal and would not impact big game as sagebrush typically is not utilized as forage. Water associated with these springs will still be available for use by big game. Reseeding may provide denser ground cover for use by small mammals.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: No habitat loss or increased disturbance to deer and elk and other wildlife would occur with this proposed action. Under the no action alternative, livestock would continue to utilize the areas around springs resulting in less ground cover for small mammals.

Mitigation: Appropriate reseeding and fencing in the immediate vicinity of the springs to reestablish ground cover and deter livestock use.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for plant and animal communities (partial, see also Vegetation and Wildlife, Aquatic): This project would not jeopardize the viability of any animal population. It would have no significant consequence on terrestrial habitat condition, utility, or function, nor have any discernible effect on animal abundance or distribution at any landscape scale. The public land health standard would thus be met.

OTHER NON-CRITICAL ELEMENTS: For the following elements, only those brought forward for analysis will be addressed further.

Non-Critical Element	NA or Not Present	Applicable or Present, No Impact	Applicable & Present and Brought Forward for Analysis
Access and Transportation		X	
Cadastral Survey	X		
Fire Management	X		
Forest Management	X		
Geology and Minerals	X		
Hydrology/Water Rights			X
Law Enforcement		X	
Noise	X		
Paleontology	X		
Rangeland Management			X
Realty Authorizations	X		
Recreation			X
Socio-Economics		X	
Visual Resources			X
Wild Horses	X		

HYDROLOGY AND WATER RIGHTS

Affected Environment: East McAndrews Gulch Spring and Wenschhof Spring have no current water rights allocations while the BLM holds water rights for Willow Spring (BLM Spring 183-09). It would be necessary to obtain the appropriate water rights for all three proposed developments including BLM Spring 183-09 (if current water rights restrict development as stated in the proposed action).

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The same consequences as listed in the water section would apply.

Environmental consequences of no action: The same consequences as listed in the water section would apply.

Mitigation: Obtain water rights for necessary spring developments.

RANGELAND MANAGEMENT

Affected Environment: East McAndrews Gulch Spring is located in the East pasture of the McAndrews Gulch allotment (06600), which is authorized by Ed Coryell (permittee) during summer months. Willow Spring is found within the Skinner Ridge allotment (06025) and is authorized by Alan and Crystal Ducey and Franklin and Vicky Norell during summer months. Wenschhof Spring is situated in the LaGrange R allotment (06825) and is authorized by the LaGrange Ranch during the summer months.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: Once developed, the East McAndrews Gulch Spring will provide a critically needed water source for Ed Coryell (permittee) within the East pasture of the allotment as water availability is limited. There is an abundance of forage in this pasture that the permittee can not effectively utilize with livestock due to the shortage of water. Similar situations of greater water availability will occur within the Skinner Ridge and LaGrange R allotments with the development of the proposed springs.

Therefore, once these springs are developed with the collection and tanking of water, the ranchers will have a greater level of distribution of authorized livestock within these BLM allotments. Benefits of greater distribution of livestock include, but not limited to, more uniform utilization patterns of livestock and reduced pressure of favored grazing localities. Also, with the placement of the tanks out of the drainages at the spring sites, it will greatly lessen the need for cattle to enter these drainages, thus less trampling and grazing will occur in these vulnerable sites. Benefits derived from the proposal, along with the proper construction of fencing and overflow of water to the existing channel, will enhance the ability to maintain and exceed Public Land Health Standards for Uplands (1), Riparian (2), and Plant and Animal Communities (3). The short-term disturbances at each spring site will be offset in the long-term by reclamation and through benefits received from proper livestock distribution with a functional water development.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: The current situation of livestock grazing, distribution and trampling of the spring sources will occur with the lack of dependable watering sources.

Mitigation: None

RECREATION

Affected Environment: The proposed action occurs within the White River Extensive Recreation Management Area (ERMA). BLM custodially manages the ERMA to provide for unstructured recreation activities such as hunting, dispersed camping, hiking, horseback riding, wildlife viewing and off-highway vehicle use.

The project areas area most resembles a Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) class of Semi-Primitive Motorized (SPM). SPM physical and social recreation setting is typically characterized by a natural appearing environment with few administrative controls, low interaction between users but evidence of other users may be present. SPM recreation experience is characterized by a high probability of isolation from the sights and sounds of humans that offers an environment that offers challenge and risk.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: If action coincides with hunting seasons (September through November) it will most likely disrupt the experience sought by those recreationists.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: No loss of dispersed recreation potential and no impact to hunting recreationists.

Mitigation: None.

VISUAL RESOURCE

Affected Environment: The East McAndrews Gulch Spring is within a VRM class III area. The objective of this class is to partially retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be moderate. Management activities may attract attention but should not dominate the view of the casual observer. Changes should repeat the basic elements found in the predominant natural features of the characteristic landscape

Willow Spring and Wenschhof Spring are within a VRM class II area. The objective of this class is to retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be low. Management activities may be seen, but should not attract the attention of the casual observer. Any changes must repeat the basic elements of form, line, color, and texture found in the predominant natural features of the characteristic landscape.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The proposed actions are small in scale relative to the surrounding landscape; therefore, any modifications will be unseen to the casual observer, and VRM III and class II objectives will be met. Furthermore, any disturbed vegetation will return making the action virtually unnoticeable within a period of a few years.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: No impact on visual resources.

Mitigation: Remove as little vegetation as possible during construction.

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS SUMMARY: Development of the proposed spring sites would have the long-term cumulative impact of enhancing riparian expression within the drainages as livestock/wildlife use would be excluded from the source and water will be available on the adjacent uplands.

PERSONS / AGENCIES CONSULTED: BLM authorized grazing permittees on associated allotments have been consulted in regards to the proposal.

INTERDISCIPLINARY REVIEW:

Name	Title	Area of Responsibility
Nate Dieterich	Hydrologist	Air Quality
Tamara Meagley	Natural Resource Specialist	Areas of Critical Environmental Concern
Tamara Meagley	Natural Resource Specialist	Threatened and Endangered Plant Species
Gabrielle Elliott	Archaeologist	Cultural Resources Paleontological Resources
Jed Carling	Rangeland Specialist	Invasive, Non-Native Species
Lisa Belmonte	Wildlife Biologist	Migratory Birds
Lisa Belmonte	Wildlife Biologist	Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive Animal Species, Wildlife
Bo Brown	Hazmat Collateral	Wastes, Hazardous or Solid
Nate Dieterich	Hydrologist	Water Quality, Surface and Ground Hydrology and Water Rights
Jed Carling	Rangeland Specialist	Wetlands and Riparian Zones
Chris Ham	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Wilderness
Jed Carling	Rangeland Specialist	Soils
Jed Carling	Rangeland Specialist	Vegetation
Lisa Belmonte	Wildlife Biologist	Wildlife Terrestrial and Aquatic
Chris Ham	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Access and Transportation
Ken Holsinger	Natural Resource Specialist	Fire Management
Robert Fowler	Forester	Forest Management
Paul Daggett	Mining Engineer	Geology and Minerals
Jed Carling	Rangeland Specialist	Rangeland Management
Penny Brown	Realty Specialist	Realty Authorizations
Chris Ham	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Recreation
Chris Ham	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Visual Resources
Valerie Dobrich	Natural Resource Specialist	Wild Horses

Finding of No Significant Impact/Decision Record (FONSI/DR)

CO-110-2005-072-EA

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)/RATIONALE: The environmental assessment and analyzing the environmental effects of the proposed action have been reviewed. The approved mitigation measures (listed below) result in a Finding of No Significant Impact on the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not necessary to further analyze the environmental effects of the proposed action.

DECISION/RATIONALE: It is my decision to implement the development of these springs as proposed and is approved subject to the mitigation measures listed below. The proposed action will have a net beneficial impact on the soils and plant communities of the affected allotments. The decision to implement the proposed action does not result in any undue or unnecessary environmental degradation and is in the conformance with the Colorado Public Land health Standards, and the White River Resource Management Plan.

MITIGATION MEASURES:

1. A Class III Pedestrian Survey prior to construction at Willow Spring must take place before construction can begin.

2. The operator is responsible for informing all persons who are associated with the project operations that they will be subject to prosecution for knowingly disturbing historic or archaeological sites, or for collecting artifacts. If historic or archaeological materials are uncovered during any project or construction activities, the operator is to immediately stop activities in the immediate area of the find that might further disturb such materials, and immediately contact the authorized officer (AO). Within five working days the AO will inform the operator as to:

- whether the materials appear eligible for the National Register of Historic Places
- the mitigation measures the operator will likely have to undertake before the site can be used (assuming in situ preservation is not necessary)
- a timeframe for the AO to complete an expedited review under 36 CFR 800-11 to confirm, through the State Historic Preservation Officer, that the findings of the AO are correct and that mitigation is appropriate.

If the operator wishes, at any time, to relocate activities to avoid the expense of mitigation and/or the delays associated with this process, the AO will assume responsibility for whatever recordation and stabilization of the exposed materials may be required. Otherwise, the operator

will be responsible for mitigation cost. The AO will provide technical and procedural guidelines for the conduct of mitigation. Upon verification from the AO that the required mitigation has been completed, the operator will then be allowed to resume construction.

3. Pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(g) the holder of this authorization must notify the AO, by telephone, with written confirmation, immediately upon the discovery of human remains, funerary items, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony. Further, pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(c) and (d), you must stop activities in the vicinity of the discovery and protect it for 30 days or until notified to proceed by the authorized officer.

4. The applicant shall be required to collect and properly dispose of any solid wastes generated by the proposed action.

5. Re-vegetate disturbed areas as recommended in proposed action, keep pipelines relatively shallow (less that 36" deep) and minimize disturbance at spring site.

6. Appropriate reseeding and fencing in the immediate vicinity of the springs to reestablish ground cover and deter livestock use.

7. Obtain water rights for necessary spring developments.

8. Remove as little vegetation as possible during construction.

COMPLIANCE/MONITORING: Associated long-term rangeland monitoring studies are located on allotments and comply with the White River Field Office monitoring protocol.

NAME OF PREPARER: Jed Carling

NAME OF ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR: Caroline Hollowed

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL: Kent E. Walter
Field Manager

DATE SIGNED: 4/28/05

ATTACHMENTS: Figure 1: Map of East McAndrews Gulch Spring
Figure 2: Map of Willow Spring
Figure 3: Map of Wenschhof Spring
General location map of the Proposed Action

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Figure 1: Map of East McAndrews Gulch Spring

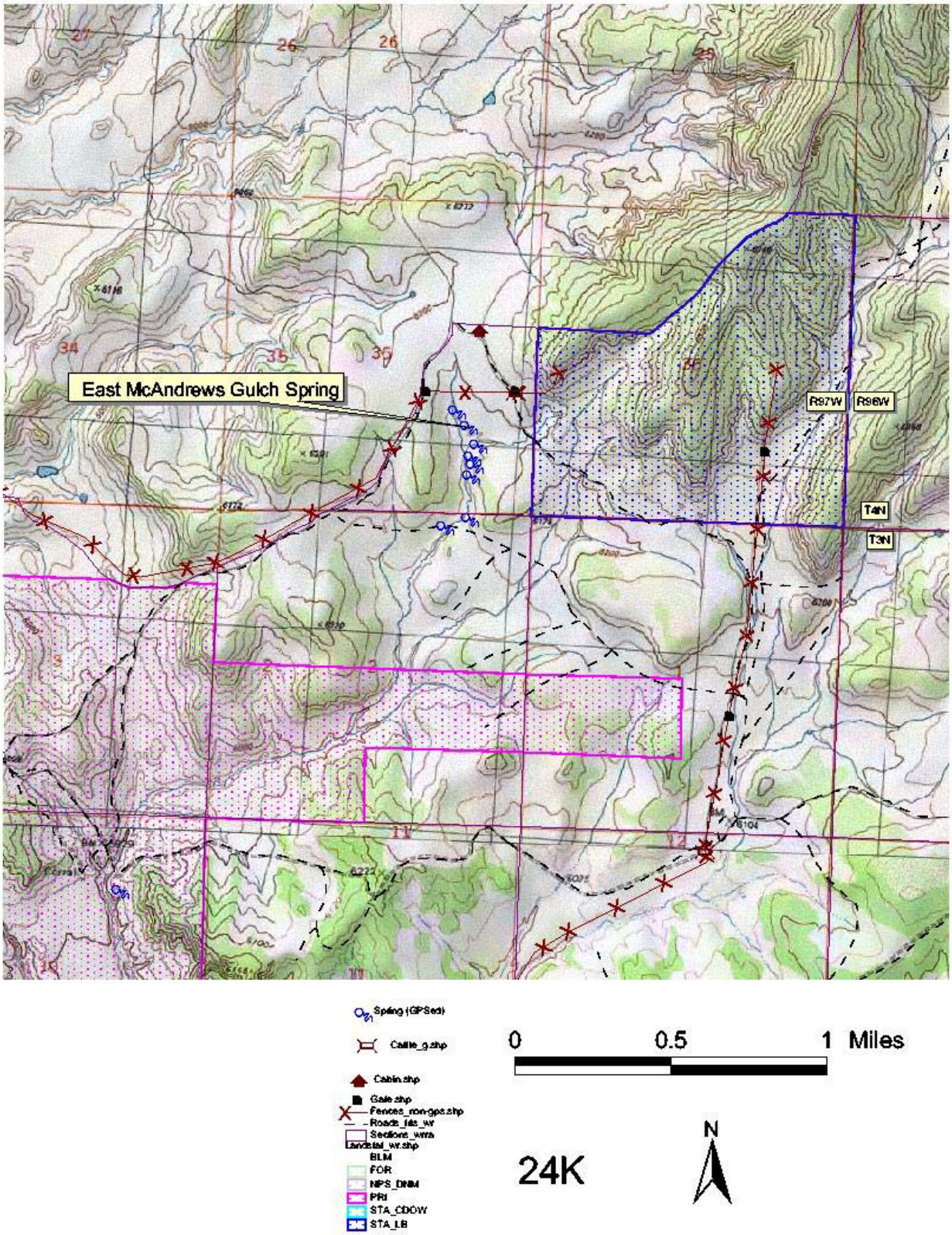


Figure 2: Map of Willow Spring

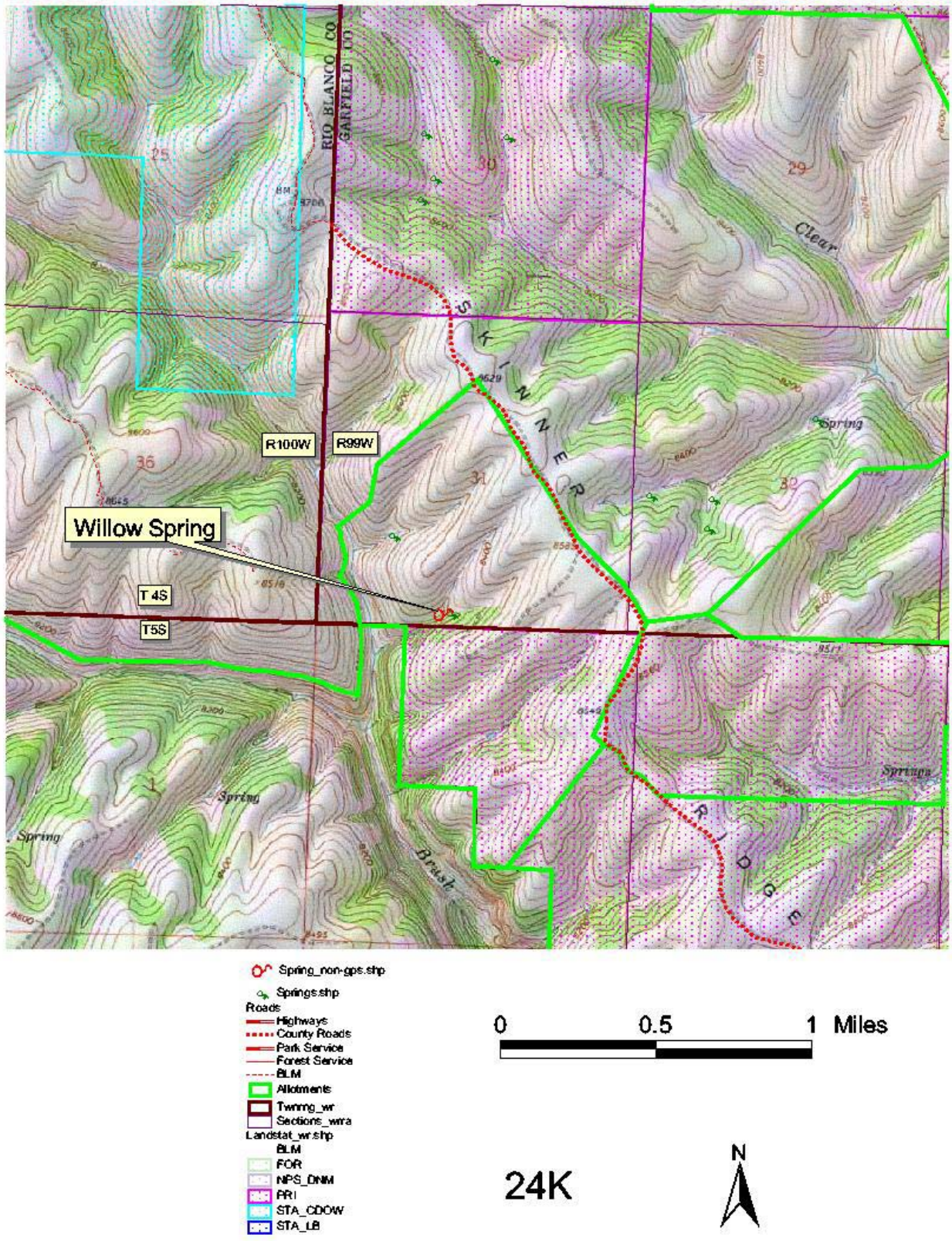
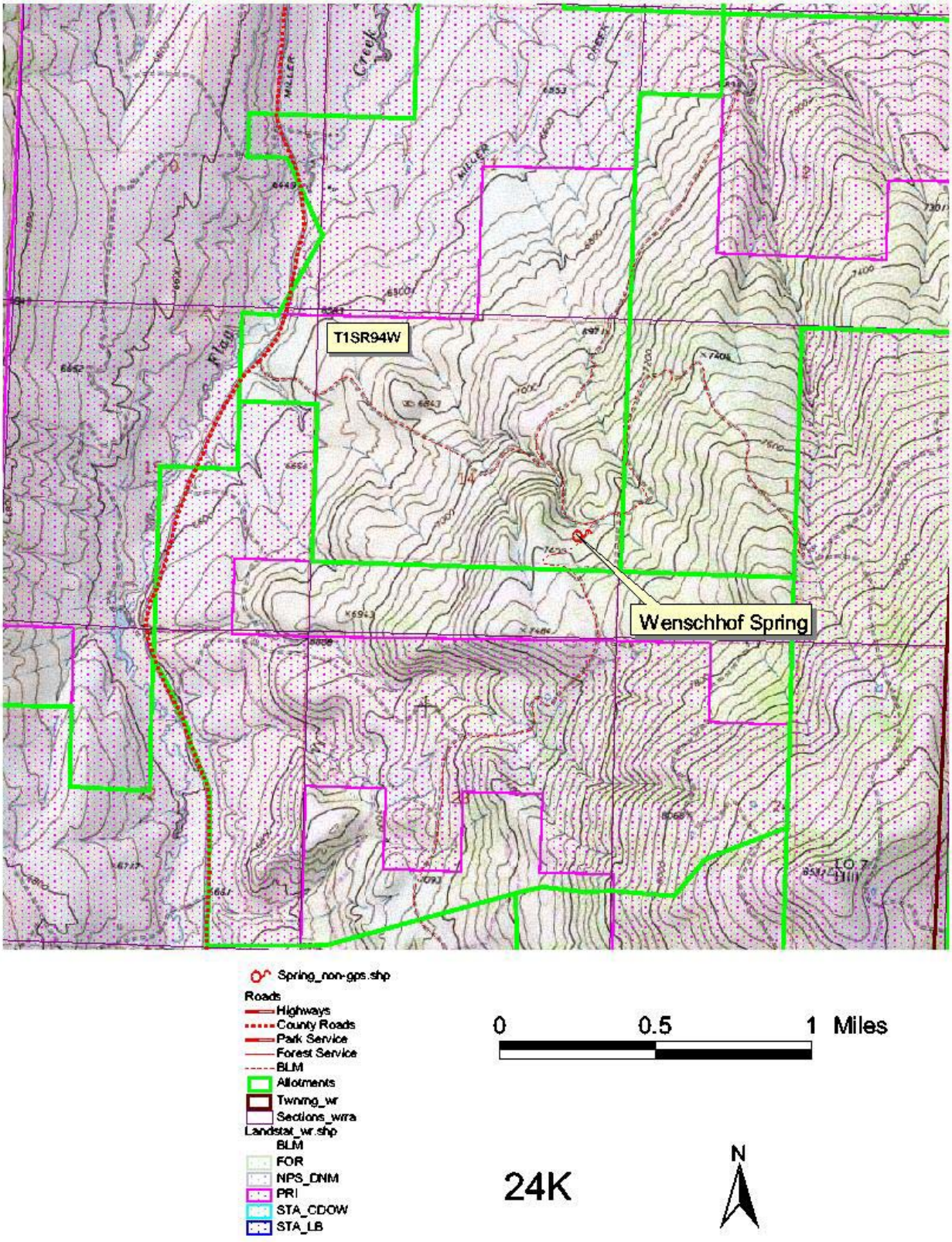


Figure 3: Map of Wenschhof Spring



Location of Proposed Action
CO-110-2005-072-EA